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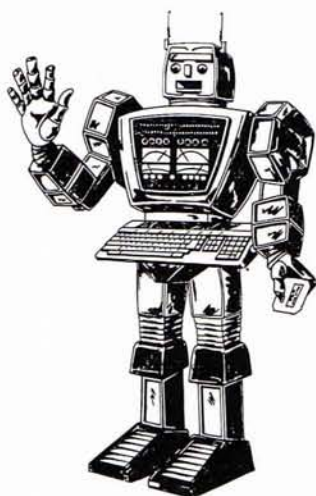
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From the Editor's Desk



Fresh Excitement...

Last month was something of a "downer", as we looked back across several bleak months of nothing but bad news, or at best, *no news* from Atari. Within a day or so of going to press with that issue, however, things began to shift in a much more positive direction. (Funny how, even with the short lead time that we enjoy, these things still surprise us!) At any rate, the first few PCs began to creep through to certain key people, indicating that they were, indeed, destined to become *real*! Following that, were other of the little "noises" that indicate that Atari is awake, and beginning, once more, to move. They have made an offer for a regional 65-store chain of electronics "supermarkets" in the Southwestern U.S., Federated Electronics, for approximately \$67 million. (Still pending SEC approval at press time) They have (*finally!*) begun shipping the long-lost SX212 modem, and the EXP-80, 80-column card for the 8-bit machines had begun arriving in warehouses at press time. First shipments of Megas2s and Mega4s have begun, and prices have been set (only in Canada) for the SLM 804 laser printer!

On other fronts, several of the more "serious" pieces of software are finally emerging, including "Drafix I", a CAD program previously available on IBMs, and now being shipped for the Atari STs and Megas. This is one that I, personally, have been awaiting for over a year!

As for the magazine, last month's issue was well-received, and we appreciate all of the compliments. As usual, I would point to my "staff" of volunteers, and thank them. They write the bulk of the material that you see here, and without their knowledge and expertise, **The JOURNAL** would amount to very little! As usual, I've also been investigating the various directions in which this publication can move. This results in different types of paper, printing, etc. For those of you who are not interested in the ramifications for your own desktop publishing knowledge, I thank you for your patience! This month's cover stock moves a bit closer towards what most of us think of as a "magazine-look", I think. Next month's cover is still in question, and may, or may not continue to include color, but these "variations" seem to be a part of the entire desktop publishing scheme. Thanks for bearing with us!

Finally, with Atari's instituting a new "closed-mouth" policy, much less information is "leaking out" early, meaning that when "official word" is received at our level, they are *supposed* to be ready to ship product! If this works out, Atari may once more begin to rise in people's estimates! All in all, I feel compelled to do a complete "about face" from last month's lament, and say that I look forward to "developments" over the next few months!

Seeya!
Jack

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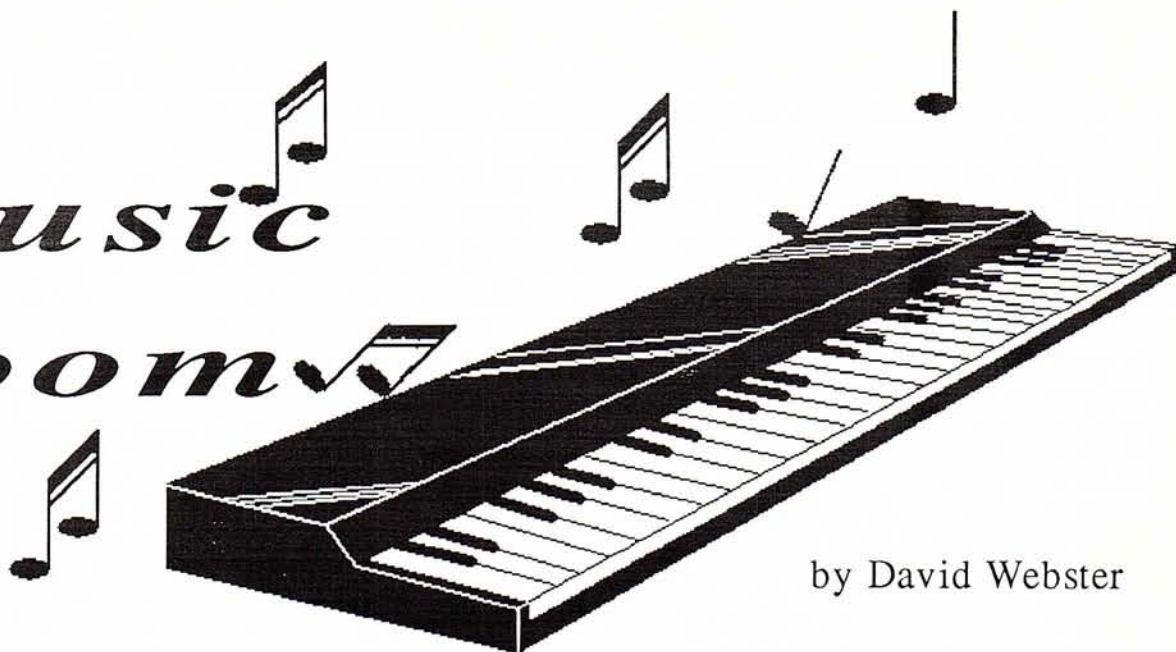
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The Music Room



by David Webster

STRIKE UP THE (one-man) BAND!

(or: Is it Live, or is it Silicon???)

I got the idea for this month's column from an old Doonesbury cartoon that's taped to my refrigerator door. It's about a Rock & Roll star who, after being out of the music scene for a bit, goes back into the recording studio only to find that his whole band has been replaced by a computer -- even his own voice has been put on a floppy! So this month I thought it would be interesting to take a look at how all this technology is changing the way musicians create and perform music now and in the future.

What's happening in the music scene today, is similar to what's happened to the business world when computers started moving into the office. Work habits changed, people were forced to learn a new and strange technology, and of course, rumors spread of how this little machines would eventually replace human beings altogether. It took a while for people to realize that computers were tools like hammers, or screwdrivers, or calculators, and not a co-worker who might take his

job someday. So it is in professional music, although in some cases, computers have replaced musicians, as we shall see.

Composing a masterpiece

The marriage of computers and music has been a boon to the composer and amateur musician alike. Computers and Sequencer software allows composing with all the instruments you intend to use in a song. Experiments can be made; arrangements can be altered a lot easier than with a tape recorder. Plus, you don't have to wait for the rest of the band to show up! For the person with little or no musical experience but with a head full of songs, composing music can become a reality. Add to this, the variety of effects and sounds, both musical and non-musical that can be duplicated by computers, and the possibilities are limitless. Computers have also spawned the one man studio, where a guy could do professional-quality work from a bedroom. What computers have done here is to

expose music to those who may never have picked up an instrument before.

The Recording Studio

Lots of changes going on here. You can now go into a studio carrying nothing but a diskette, and record an entire band. I did a session last year, where I was the only human on the whole song, and all I did then was spice up the drum machine tracks! Of course, it took someone to write the song and sequence it (and carry the disk!), but this is an area where some musicians may feel threatened, mainly those who don't understand it. Drum machines have had a big impact in the studio, because recording live drums has always been the most difficult and time-consuming instrument to record. Drum machines require no setup time, and give perfectly timed patterns every time, as well as unique rhythms that no human could even think about! This was evident in the early eighties, when you could instantly tell when a song

(continued...)

The Music Room (continued...)

used a machine because of the crazy drum tracks. Fortunately, this quickly became boring and the trend now is to make everything sound more "human", which is not easy to do. MIDI has also opened the way for more sophisticated enhancement of natural instruments, creating unique effects that can also be duplicated on the stage as well, my next topic.



The One-Man Band

Remember the old one-man bands where the guy would be wearing this harness around his neck with harmonicas and horns, with a big bass drum on his back and a pair of cymbals between his knees? Well the same thing's happening again, except now he has MIDI keyboards and drum machines, effects processors, computers and a microphone. Guys like the legendary Brooks Reid (I call him legendary because every musician in town knows him -- usually because he owes them money!) have made the transition from group to "OMB". There are certain advantages to this. First, you make more money. Second, you don't have to deal with other musicians. A lot of small clubs prefer hiring OMB's instead of a DJ, because people want live music. So how do people react to one guy and a bunch of machines? I asked Brooks this and he says for the most part, people love it, but occasionally there are a few who

seem to think that he's cheating or not really performing, and sometimes people even get a little insulted by it. In my case (*Dave's a drummer, for those of you who didn't know - Ed.*), I have recently joined a duo that has been using drum machines, but decided they needed a live drummer in order to make it a "band" so they could get more work. People who get offended by sequenced music don't see the hours that are spent creating it, and when done correctly, as Brooks does, it can be very entertaining. Computers will not totally replace people as far as live performance is concerned, but I think in the future we will see smaller sized groups (2 or 3 members) that will be able to create tremendous amounts of music with the help of computers, while still providing the excitement that only flesh and blood can give!

Just as computers have changed the way people work forever, it has also changed the way we approach music, and even what we perceive music to be. The thing to remember is that the computer should be looked upon as a musical instrument -- one with infinite possibilities that allow new and unique musical expressions. The best thing about it all is that not just musicians, but *anyone*, can make music now. So what are you waiting for?



Nybbles...

(From time to time, small bits of information, manufacturer's press releases, and other items show up in our mailbox. These pieces usually get "lost in the shuffle", as the larger picture takes shape. Beginning with this issue, we'll be trying to insert them when and where they'll fit. -- Ed.)



If you're a fan of ST Writer, but have longed for still more improvements to it, then you'll want to take a look at the latest, "GEM-ized" version, 2.2. Once again, Dr. Bruce Noonan, of Edmonds, WA, has done his "magic" on this program, and you may now use the mouse in limited fashion. Bruce refuses to do anything that would cause the program to slow down, since this has always been its premium feature, but he's now implemented the ability to configure format lines from the GEM window, as well as moving around within the text body itself, with the mouse. One of the subtle improvements has also been that of implementing a cursor locator, based upon a byte counter, so that the user may determine where his cursor is, relative to the unformatted text. Really handy when editing requires one to jump back and forth! Thanks again, Bruce!



While prices for Megs have not yet been "officially" confirmed by Atari (as of press time), it is understood that they will be announced at the Boston area Atarifest, Oct. 9-11. Prices have not yet been set for the Atari lasers, which are now expected sometime in November.



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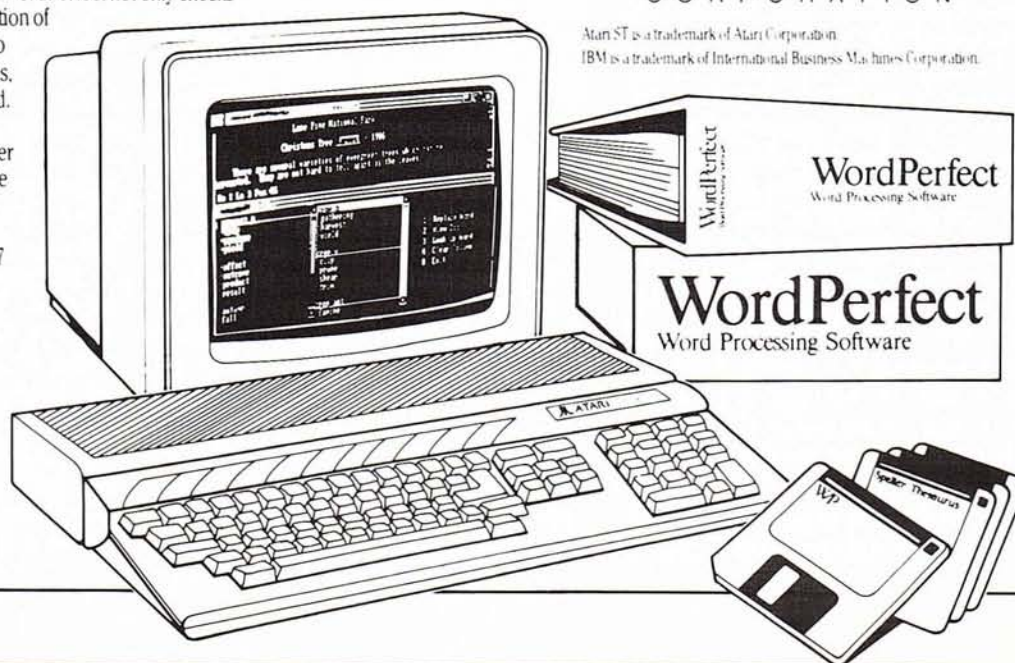
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One More Time...

More thoughts on the legalities of copying ...

What if you CAN'T buy it?

by Sara H. Groves

The following comment is from Brian Moriarty (of INFOCOM) in response to my question about the availability of NORD and BERT for 8-bit Ataris. *"<It would be> technically possible but economically futile. The cost of writing and debugging a new interpreter would far surpass any profit we could hope to make. Declining interest in the 8-bits along with the usual rampant piracy have made that market our lowest priority.*

"It is sad to see the Atari 8's fading away. It was (and still is) the best 8-bit machine. The single biggest reason for its decline was piracy. Let's hope the same doesn't happen to the ST. Unfortunately, the ST community is already getting that reputation within the industry ..."

Perhaps this will help to clarify for some of you the reason many of us get so upset about piracy. However, it occurs to me that there is also some confusion about just what piracy is and is not. Since I deal with games most of the time, it's the area I know best but all of this could apply to any type of software. One of the comments heard so often is "I can't afford to spend \$35 or \$40 for a game". Those of us who insist that piracy is stealing, and know that it hurts not only the industry but the people involved, in a very personal way, tend to say that simply means

you should buy fewer games. However, it has become apparent lately, that not everyone understands that there are perfectly legal ways to get around the problem. For instance, you and a friend with compatible computers decide you want to play the two latest games, so you pool your money and buy one of each. What's wrong with that? Nothing.

Next, you need to figure out how to share them. There are three ways to do this. One, you both sit down in front of one computer and play the game together. That can be lots of fun, and is, in fact, the ideal way no matter how much money you have.

The second way is for each of you to take one of the games home to play it by yourself and, when you're finished, switch and each one play the other game. Nothing wrong with that either. The third way is to make a copy of each game and both play each game separately but at the same time. Now *that's* piracy.

Any time you play an original game [or a back up copy with the original in your possession] with the docs, you are doing something perfectly legal. If you want to borrow a friend's game to play on your machine, borrow the original with the docs, not his backup. It's like a book. You borrow a book, no problem...However, if your friend copies the book and lets you

read the copies, that's illegal. Often it's a simple matter of which disk you borrow. If the game's not protected, there's no reason you can't play your friend's backup copy so long as you also have the original.

We all think of ourselves as "just one person" but we can each have an enormous impact on the distribution of software. Copying a piece of software is simple and quick but what you get is an exact replica of the original so it's not like copying books, music, tapes, etc.; the 50th copy of a copy is the same (quality-wise) as the original. This makes copying software a much more serious problem than other types of copying. It also makes it confusing. A Xerox copy of a book is obvious. A "backup" piece of software isn't so obvious.

Last issue I mentioned a Star Trek game which has been extensively pirated despite not yet being released. It had been mentioned to me many months ago and I was asked about it on CompuServe by a couple of people, one in particular who had seen a demo of it and was wondering when it would be released. My answer was that I, too, had seen a "demo" copy which looked like a very early test copy and, since it looked like a really nice game, I had checked. What I found out was that there were no demos out for it and, thus, what we

(continued...)

One More Time... (continued...)

both had seen were pirate copies. The response to that stunned me and many others. *The game is not yet released here but copies of it are all over the place!* Someone even offered to send one to Brian Moriarty of Infocom! The comment these people made over and over was there was nothing wrong with having a pirate copy of a "European game" [which is all there is] since it was not released over here, and they wanted to buy it but could not. This is confusing. Why should that make it okay? It wasn't a simple, clear-cut issue. Here were people who had in their possession, unauthorized copies of a game, and who, simultaneously, insisted that we were out of line to accuse them of piracy. It didn't take long before everyone was confused. Perhaps someone who is a little less personally involved in the discussion would care to clarify

this.

The question specifically is:

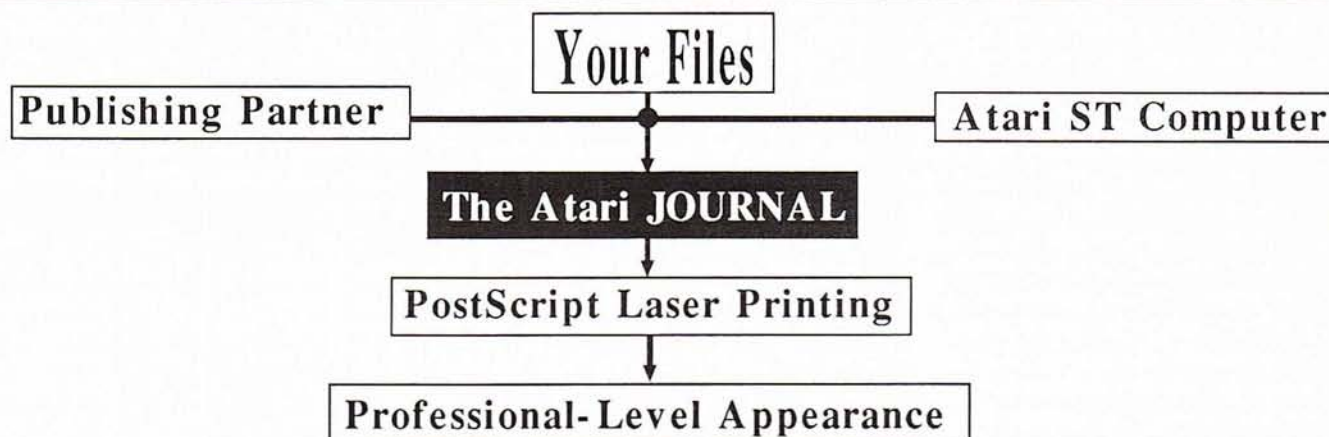
Why would someone who freely admits not just having but also playing an unauthorized copy of a game feel there was no justification for saying that what they did was piracy?

I don't see the difference but would honestly like to do so.

The problem the Atari community has is two-fold. First, we're a small group and even one pirate copy is a large percentage of overall sales. IBM has sold so many machines they can just raise the price of their software to cover their losses and there are enough sales to keep them in business. This is not the case with Atari. Having fewer owners also means that a "few" pirates are very

visible and represent a large share of the potential market. Second, many people don't seem to understand what piracy is, and what it does. The fact that someone would offer to send a professional software author a "copy" of a game, whether it is distributed here or not, makes that fact very clear. If this person had understood what was going on and the extent of the problem, he would have known that Brian would never have accepted such a thing. Never! In fact, just the offer was insulting. Perhaps it would be helpful if we all understood exactly what it is we are talking about and what's wrong with it. At least no one would be insisting that others wronged them when they were accused of piracy.

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The Beginner's ST

Part 12

by Steve Tearle

FREE! (and legal!) Software, and Where to Find It!

I'm starting off this month with a question that I'm often asked regarding software. This deals with the legalities regarding different types of software available. As usual, it's the terminology that needs to be addressed.

A lot of very nice software is available FREE OF CHARGE... that's right, absolutely free. This software is placed in the public domain, and known, oddly enough, as "Public Domain Software", or simply "PD", for short. Public domain software is written by individuals or groups, and may be freely duplicated and distributed through such means as national telecommunications networks, user group libraries, local electronic bulletin boards, or schools. Public domain software isn't limited to programs, it can also be in the form of pictures, text files, music, or any other data. Authors of public domain programs don't expect to make any cash return on their efforts, but rather the simple recognition and gratitude of their peers.

That's not all, there's even more (almost!) free software around. The second level is called "Shareware", or "Freeware". The quality of Shareware is usually better than public domain software. This software, like public domain, can be freely distributed through the same channels, but the difference is that in Shareware, the author expects some return for his/her efforts. Usually this is a request for a donation in the form of an information screen that appears somewhere in the program. The author may ask for \$5 - \$50 depending on the quality and usability of the software (ten bucks is the usual request). If the user finds the software appropriate to

his/her needs after using it, the donation is usually well worth it. Though the concept of shareware never really took off in the Atari community through the 8-bit years, many IBM and Macintosh programmers put out some *SUPER* Shareware products (one that immediately comes to mind is *Red Ryder* on the Mac) and have done quite well. ST owners are just starting to see Shareware and Freeware programs appear in quantity for their machines. I hope that these authors are successful so that we can see a lot more!

The final level is commercial software. As I have said before in this column, look before you leap. Commercial software, with few exceptions (like *Designware*, a local firm) will cost \$29 per program and up. Some ST software, like the OS/9 operating system, or UNIX, may cost hundreds of dollars. Before plunking down your money on some turkey of a program (I HAVE!), read reviews, talk to folks, go to a computer store and try it out. Most computer stores will have no problem letting you try out a piece of software on the premises, but that same store will not accept the software back after you have purchased it, for obvious reasons. Don't go into a computer store and spend two hours tying up the salesman's time, looking at a piece of software, only to go home and order it through the mail. You may save a few bucks, but that's pretty rude, not to mention that the rest of us would like to have the store still be in business when we shop there! On the other hand, mailorder will save you some money if you are going to base your software purchases on friends recommendations or magazine reviews.

On to a new topic. Another question surfaced this month about RAM disks. Well, I'm no expert, but I'll give it a shot:

A RAM disk is a section of a computer's Random Access Memory, that has been 'partitioned' off and appears to the operating system as another disk drive. On a 64K computer, the memory is rather limited, so RAM disks were not used much, if at all on the 8-bit Ataris. The ST series however, have lots of 'elbow room' as far as memory is concerned, and RAM disks can be a terrific addition to your ST desktop.

RAM disks are usually created by a program that resides in an AUTO folder and is booted up when you crank up your computer. At that point, a RAM disk of a predetermined size will appear as a disk drive 'filecabinet' icon on your desktop. Depending on the ST you are using, you can have RAM disks of many sizes. I keep disks with various sizes of RAM disks available, as for example, a 720K RAM disk is handy when I am converting picture files. I use smaller RAM disks for Uploading and Downloading files through the modem.

Why use a RAM disk at all? *Because it seems instantaneous!* As soon as you click on a program it's booted, BOOM! It's like having the fastest disk drive possible! Converting files, squeezing (ARC'ing), unsqueezing files, and many other uses abound for RAM disks. The Dade Atari Users Group monthly disk (my usual plug!) has put at least three different public domain RAM disk programs on their monthly disks, CompuServe, Genie, and local BBS'es may also be sources of RAM disk programs.



Talking With Other ST Computers

Using the MIDI port for communicating

by Richard Leinecker

Author of "Your ST Comes Alive!"

Connecting computers may be done for a variety of reasons. This article presents some ideas that you may find helpful in developing applications. The MIDI port is used because it is easy to program, the wire connections are minimal, and the other ports are kept free for other things.

For starters, it would be wise to use only two computers. The hardware is simple. It includes four five-pin DIN plugs and two pieces of two-conductor wire. One of the two connections are made from the first computer's MIDI out socket to the second computer's MIDI in socket. The other connection is made from the second computer's MIDI out socket to the first computer's MIDI in socket. Figure 1 is a block diagram.

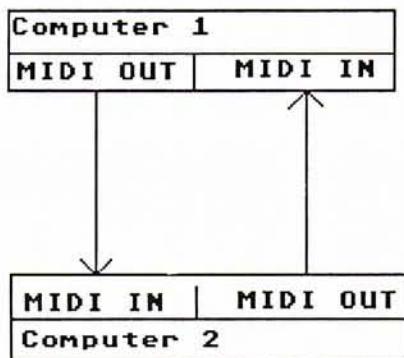


Figure 1

The MIDI in and the MIDI out socket configurations will be discussed first. Looking at the computer, identify pins 4 and 5 of the MIDI In socket. Pin 4 is labeled "OUT Transmit Data" and pin 5 is labeled "OUT Loop Return." Next, identify pins 4 and 5 of the MIDI

out socket. Pin 4 is labeled "IN Receive Data" and pin 5 is labeled "IN Loop Return." Figure 2 is a diagram of the MIDI ports.

MIDI Out

 1-THRU Transmit Data
 2-Shield Ground
 3-THRU Loop Return
 4-OUT Transmit Data
 5-OUT Loop Return
 MIDI In

 1-Not Connected
 2-Not Connected
 3-Not Connected
 4-IN Receive Data
 5-IN Loop Return

Figure 2

Make sure that the 5 pin DIN plugs are in a 180 degree configuration as some versions are in 270 degree form. Look at the DIN plug and notice how it will plug into the socket. It is important that you do not get the connection reversed since you may be looking at it backwards when you solder. Taking one two-conductor cable, solder to pin 4 and 5 of one din plug. Now, follow the wire that you have already soldered to pin 4 and solder it to pin 4 of the other din plug. Do the same with pin 5. Follow it through and solder it to pin 5 of the other plug. This completes connecting cable 1. You should duplicate these exact instructions for cable 2. Figure 3 is a diagram of the connections.

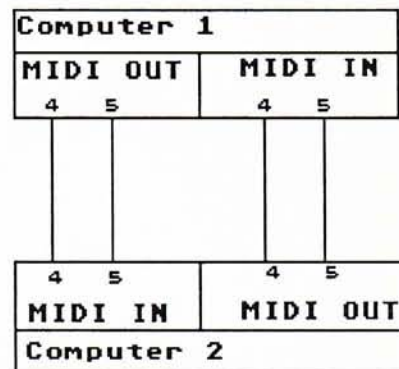


Figure 3

Next, you must plug the end of one cable into the MIDI out socket of the first computer and plug the other end of this cable into the MIDI in socket of the second computer. The second connecting cable should be connected from the MIDI out socket of the second computer to the MIDI in socket of the first computer. This is all of the hardware necessary to connect two ST computers.

The programming aspect is not too difficult. There is a demonstration program on the Computer Spectrum BBS called NETWORK.PRG. This program checks for a keypress. If there has been a keypress, it sends the character out over the MIDI port using the Bconout command. Since the character is gotten from the keyboard using Crawcin, it must be printed on the screen also. The program then checks for incoming data from the MIDI port using the Bconstat command. If there is a character waiting, the Bconin command is used to get it. Bconin waits for a character and does not return until it gets one. Thus, the

(continued...)

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Talking With Other STs...(continued...)

data status check using Bconstat is necessary.

Two computers may not be enough for many applications. There are two routes to go at this point, the daisy chain scheme or the star scheme. The daisy chain configuration sends data down a chain, sequentially, from one computer to the next. An identification package is sent which contains source and destination information. Figure 4, shown below, is a block diagram of such a daisy chain configuration.

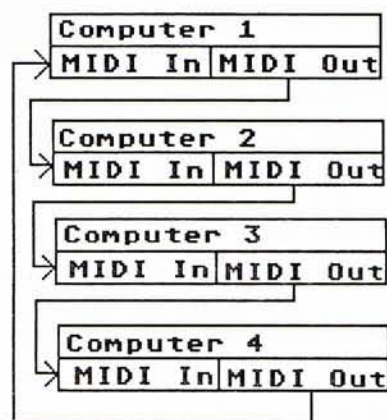


Figure 4

To illustrate how the above system might be used, a hypothetical data transfer on a hypothetical system will be described. Bear in mind that this is a great oversimplification and is meant for illustrative purposes only. First, the source computer sends two bytes, the source number and the destination number. Suppose that the source computer is 1 and the destination computer is 3. The first byte will be a 1 and the second byte will be a 3. This information tells the destination computer and all computers in between that the data which will follow must be relayed to computer 3. All other computers will be notified that the transfer is taking place so that they will not interrupt with their own data transfer initiation. This data is received by computer 2 and then passed on to computer 3. Computer 3 knows not

to send it any further because it is the destination computer. Computer 1 then sends a package indicating that all of the data has been sent. From this point, any of the computers may initiate a data transfer.

The variations on the above data transfer system are endless. The complexities are also much greater than the previous paragraph would indicate. Recall that the above paragraph was only a hypothetical system.

The hardware for this system is just as simple as the two computer system. Beginning with the first computer, each computer's MIDI out port is connected to the next computer's MIDI in port. At the end of the chain, the last computer's MIDI out port will be connected to the first computer's MIDI in port. Many more than 4 computers can be connected in this manner.

Another way of networking computers would be in a star configuration. To carry this out, all computers could listen and only respond when their identification number is called. This may rob each computer of processor time as it listens for its ID number and ignores all other data. The ST's MIDI port is interrupt driven, so the data would appear in the buffer regardless of the ID number. These are problems that could be solved through software techniques.

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At a recent Atari show in Dusseldorf, W. Germany, Shiraz Shivji, designer of the Atari ST series of computers, mentioned several new items expected from Atari during the next year or so. First, was the CD-ROM, to be audio-compatible, and expected to be selling for under \$500, by Christmas of this year. (At least this would tie to Atari's recent offer to purchase Federated electronic stores. - Ed.) Also mentioned was an anticipated RISC-type processor unit to be connected to the new Megs, as well as some "blue-sky" machines, including a 68030-based unit, complete with 68222, and SASI. No time frame on this one. It was also estimated that the long-projected "EST" might be seen by COMDEX/Las Vegas in November!



The

Adventurer

by Sara H. Groves

Well, I seem to have received my information from Firebird. It's a bit out of date by now but there's a lot of interesting information in it. What they sent was a "complete media information kit on the company and its products." It's rather lengthy and I'm not sure how to put it briefly, especially since I seem to have been misleading in an earlier article. It *does*, however, sound a little different from my previous understanding of the situation. British Telecommunications, PLC (U.K.) owns 5 software houses in England, including Rainbird, and also owns Firebird Licensees, Inc. which is "the exclusive import, distribution and marketing channel for all software products originating from any of BT's English software houses." Magnetic Scrolls, on the other hand, is an independant organization, holding a contractual agreement with Rainbird and Firebird. Generally, British Telecom is an "umbrella" organization and we deal with Firebird, not Rainbird.

Okay, on with the good stuff. They really have quite an impressive list of software. It's divided into three groups but, for now, we only need to be concerned with two. First there's the Premium Line (\$39.95-\$44.95) which will be marketed under the Rainbird logo. This group includes **GUILD of THIEVES**, **PAWN**,

STARGLIDER, etc. The second is the Mid-Range Line (\$24.95-\$29.95) which will bear the Firebird logo prominently displayed on the packages.

Listed under Fall releases for the Premium Line [ST only, no 8-bits] are **GUILD OF THIEVES** [I didn't write it!], **KNIGHT ORC**, **SENTRY**, **UNIVERSAL MILITARY SIMULATOR**, and **ADVANCED ART STUDIO**. For 1st Quarter 1988 they list **BLACK LAMP**. U.M.S. looks very impressive but, as it's a war game, I'll just tell you the information is here if you want it. **KNIGHT ORC** sounds like a great game with three disks and super advanced graphics.

For the Mid-Range Line they list **SILICON DREAMS** and **JEWELS OF DARKNESS**. These two games are already available for one computer [at \$29.95 list] and each one contains three different games complete with stories all their other games have. We have assumed that these are older games, just now being released in the U.S., with less impressive graphics. The person who told me this had not played them yet and had simply looked at the packaging. However, they would certainly seem to be an excellent value and are listed to be available for both computers in the Atari line.

The above information was sent to me via the Editor, by Tom Benford, President of Benford

Communications, Inc., Public Relations Counsel for Firebird Licensees, Inc. (U.S.) who has asked to be put on *The Journal's* mailing list. This being so, I would like to ask him a question or two and make some comments. First, what's an *SKU*? Second, is there, in fact, a method behind the distribution policies at Firebird? For instance, I was told GoT would be available in June, it is scheduled for Fall release on your list, but July isn't June or Fall and that's when it arrived. Knight Orc is scheduled for release in August and it's not out yet [mid-September]. Third, why does the \$49.95 list **Golden Path** have the Firebird label? Fourth, is there someone at Firebird we can contact who knows the software and can answer technical questions? This is a definite need for such a person and, as far as I know, none has been designated for the coming months. Questions range from "why won't my disk boot", to "there are 14 people currently snarling and griping at the ending of [game]." When we played **Pawn**, it took some assistance from Mr. Davies for us to finish in addition to an overseas call and a hint from a British subject before we could write the review.

I also received a very large package from Ken Williams at Sierra. In it was a complete set of all the Sierra games currently available for the ST and the hint

(continued...)

The Adventurer (continued...)

books for every one! Stacey, age 11, wanted to play the one in the pink box [aka **Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards**] but I vetoed that and she settled for **King's Quest I**. It really is a good game and the technical aspects are more like **KQ III** than **KQ II** because it's a later release on the ST. In addition, we [as in CIS, not Stacey] finally broke down and looked up the full set of points for **Space Quest**.

No wonder we didn't find the last point!! Who would ever think of kissing a Sarien guard?? Not me! In addition, the beta test copies of **Police Quest** have gone out to the IBM and clone users so it's on the way. Testing takes about a month, and then, usually, another month for the ST version.

The review copies of **PLUNDERED HEARTS** are out and everyone seems to like it quite a lot, men included. I gather this has surprised some people, but given the wide appeal of all the Infocom games, there's no reason to think it would be otherwise. **NORD and BERT** should also be out about the same time, probably by the time you read this. No one has commented on this one [not an indication of anything good or bad] but the package should have all the information you need. It is reasonable to assume that the games will be excellent examples of the word game genres and that, if you like that type of game, you will enjoy Infocom's version.

If there is anyone out there who has completed **BREAKERS**, any of the **HOBBIT** series, or any of the **SHERLOCK** series and would be willing to give hints on them, I'd love to hear from you. In addition, there is a game called **SAIGON** by Scott Adams which only one person seems to be playing. If you can help, there are people out there who would dearly love to hear from you.

As for me, I've done something very unusual. [Well, it is for me

anyway.] I've started playing **ALTERNATE REALITY**. The ST version [only The City disk is available on the 16-bits] is clearly a port. For me, the biggest problem with that is the greater speed and smoother scrolling of the larger machine which makes it extremely difficult to map. It should take six "clicks" to go a "block" but many times it is nearly impossible to figure out whether you have gone two clicks or five. In any case, it is certainly an addictive game and I'm having a lot of fun playing it. The **Dungeon** disk is already out for the 8-bits but the ST version won't arrive for a long time, well after the first of the year at least.



Question Time:

Guild of Thieves: *What do I do about the bear? I have a key to open his cage but it's certainly no help since he just keeps killing me.*

A. You need to feed him something he likes. However, this is not an exercise in making friends with ferocious animals, so lace it with something that will put him out of commission.

Lurking Horror: *That kleptomaniac urchin clearly has something I need, hidden under that jacket of his. How do I get him to give it to me? I've tried giving him the bones but all he does is eat them.*

A. Notice how jumpy and skittish he is? Well, he's heard some pretty scary stories about this place and has no idea if you're involved or not. If you came by with something rather gruesome, especially if it appeared to be alive, you could probably convince him that you had something extremely unpleasant in mind and take off so fast he dropped something useful.

King's Quest I: *How do I get past the troll? Not only would it be a lot easier to complete my map if he weren't there, there are some big holes I can't fill with him blocking the way.*

A. Think about all those fairy tales you heard as a child. They'll come in very handy in this game. You might be able to get some help from a friend if he thought you could be persuaded to supply him with a snack.

Review:

"ST Disk Drives: Inside and Out"

Published by:
Abacus Software

As I stared at a deleted hard drive, I knew the process of recovering my data would be formidable. I managed to borrow an "undelete" utility and found that it would only recover those files on drive A that were not in a folder. I eventually found a program that was adequate, but before I knew of this program's availability, I began to write my own undelete utility in pure desperation.

I am the owner of the Atari developer's package so I naturally turned to that vast and infallible body of knowledge (gag) for direction. There was a lot of information on the subject, but in Atari's typical manner, it was steeped in mysticism. While breaking through a brick wall with my head, one of the SysOps from another BBS called, and said that he could end my plight (no, not hemlock). We got together and recovered most of what was lost and The Computer Spectrum BBS was back in business.

After that episode, I spent time in every bookstore, looking at books on the subject of the IBM disk format, which is now being used by the ST computers. These books were very informative, and my quest for the necessary information to write my own public domain undelete utility seemed closer. The problem is that there is a lot of missing information, unique to the ST, and much of it has to do with the hardware and boot sectors.

Several months ago, while pretending to be a bachelor, Steve Tearle showed me a copy of the Abacus book that covered the

subject of ST disk drives. Of course I eagerly leafed through it. At a glance, I could see that it covered the disk format, the boot sector, and GEMdos commands. It also had a section covering disk access in four different languages -- what a find! As I arrived home and read more carefully, I found that this was only the beginning, and that there was much more to come.

Every ST owner should be aware of some basic disk concepts. The first two chapters of the book cover this very well. File extender types, such as .PRG, .TTP, and others, are explained. Sequential and random access files are explained at a very basic level. For the computer novice, this is very helpful information when accessing the drives. I find that some knowledge on the subject enables people to feel more at ease on the machine, and thus enjoy it more. Unfortunately this ends at page ten, and from that point on, it becomes a very technical book.

Chapter two explains file access by BASIC, Pascal, C, and Fortran. All of the GEMdos calls are described, and sample programs are contained in the text. For your information, the BASIC types that can be used are ST BASIC and GFA BASIC. DBASIC uses its own file structure, so these examples will not work too well. The Pascal examples were written with the ST PASCAL Plus compiler. The C examples are written in Lattice C instead of the developer's Alcyon C, which is hard for me to understand, since so many people use the Alcyon C compiler.

Chapter three describes, in detail, the disk structure. It starts with a detailed description of the boot sector, and every byte and its function are explained well enough for programmers to write their own boot programs. The data format is then described, followed by a discussion of the number of tracks, sectors, and bytes. The BIOS parameter block is explained, along with the method of implementation from C source code. The file allocation table (FAT) and the directory sectors are explained, to finish the discussion of the disk data structures. Other topics described in chapter three are program headers and relocation tables, but for most programmers, these last two are relatively obscure points.

At this point I have to mention the assembly language examples in the book. Throughout the text, wherever the author thought it appropriate, there are examples of disk access procedures in 68000 assembly language, and these routines would be extremely useful for the programmer who knows the 68000. They could be included in an assembly language program, or called from another language such as C or BASIC.

Chapter four covers the actual disk drive hardware. It was interesting to know, perhaps because I am a quasi-hardware type, but its usefulness may be rather limited. I suppose that since this information is not readily available, the hardware hacker who is trying to implement an original design may benefit. It is about ten times as much information as that which Atari will give you, if you call and ask them!

Chapter five deals with hard disk access from 68000 assembly language. If you are designing DMA handlers, partitioning accessories, and formatting programs, this information will be valuable. You will also need to know 68000 assembly language.

(continued...)

"ST Disk Drives..." (continued...)

Chapter six is the listing and description of a RAM disk program, which might actually be very useful for programmers...don't forget that third place in the *Compute ST* programmer's contest was a RAM disk accessory!

Chapter seven will be useful for those of you who program in BASIC. This chapter contains assembly language listings for every GEMdos function. That probably seems a bit strange, since I just said that they would be useful for BASIC programmers. These listings are intended to be called from a BASIC program, but first they must be assembled. The assembled object code has then to be loaded into a string in BASIC. From there, these routines can be used with the CALL A(P1, P2, P3) syntax, where A is the address of the routine, and P1, P2, and P3 are parameters that are passed to the routines.

I can highly recommend this book to any ST owner. For the ST programmers, this will become a valuable reference book for your shelf. As I go off into the sunset with my "ST Disk Drive" book, I am resolved that you will see an undelete utility soon! With the great Abacus publication, I am sure that it will now be possible.

-Reviewed by Richard Leinecker-

Review:

The Expert 24e Modem

Price: \$199.95

Long have I loved my ADC 1200 Baud 'Smart Duck' modem. It's a wonderful piece of hardware. However, being a remote SysOp for several local BBSs, and the fact that CompuServe had just lowered their 2400 baud rates to the same as 1200 baud rates, got me thinking. When I saw the price of 2400 baud modems drop below the \$200 mark, that *really* got me thinking, and looking seriously.

The way I saw it, I could still clear \$100 for my ADC, as the demand for used 1200 baud'ers is pretty strong. That meant that if I found a 2400 baud modem to meet my specifications, I could upgrade (for \$100!) to a modem at twice my present speed. After looking at both the BASIC 2400 baud and the 'THE' 2400 baud modems, both

under \$200, I was rather disappointed with performance and/or documentation.

Then I saw this quarter page ad in *Computer Shopper* for the Expert 24e. They had a 800 toll free information number, which caught my eye. I never use mail order unless the company has an 800 number, the sign of a serious commitment to the retail market. I called, and spoke at length to one of the technicians. Satisfied, I ordered the modem.

There's only one word for 2400 baud. Wonderful! Reading text files is about the same, but file transfers...ahhhh, what a pleasure. Even though I quickly found out that CompuServe doesn't really function at 2400 baud in 2400 baud mode (closer to 1600-1800 baud by my judgement), the speed difference was quite noticeable over the 'ol 1200. So far, I've been using the Expert 24e modem for about six weeks and it hasn't done me wrong. Oh, sometimes it can't

tell a busy signal from a dead line, but the ADC did that on occasion as well.

The Expert 24e, as far as I can tell, is 100% Hayes command set compatible (an industry standard). It comes with a 100% 2-year warranty, speaker, autodial/autoanswer, volume control, and 2 phone jacks...plus other goodies. The manual is very detailed, and so far it's worked fine with both the Macintosh and IBM emulation programs as well as my all-time favorite, *Flash* on the ST. For the price, the Expert 24e is well worth looking into as either a first modem, or an upgrade.

The same company also sells a 1200 baud modem for \$109.00.

-Reviewed by Steve Tearle-

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PURISTS

That catchy header is in reference to some of us who suffer from tunnel vision. I suppose that we all do it from time to time, and other special-interest groups are equally guilty, I should think, but at any rate, what I'm referring to are those Desktop Publishers who have, in the last year or less, suddenly acquired the ability to produce MOST of a publication from their keyboards, and now believe that there's some sort of sacred rule requiring same.

There's NOT.

The fact that I can now sit myself down in front of my computer (in the middle of the night, usually!), and write, assemble, and typeset a semi-complete publication, should be regarded as marvelous...NOT as the "only way".

For several centuries before the advent of computers, printers, and indeed, calligraphers, have produced wonderful examples of the printed art. They have used whatever means were required, in order to accomplish their desired end. In point of fact, during the last century, when there were no photographic means available for illustrations, men sat down and scratched drawings into the surface of wooden or metal plates, in order to show readers some form of picture, intended to be integrated with text. Thanks to many technological advances, the printer's art soon evolved into what has been more recently been photographically-based, as a general rule. This has remained the status quo for only the last 50-75 years, and is now slowly being *modified* by "other" methods, including Desktop Publishing.

Why am I saying all of this? Simply because I am a believer in using whatever methods are required to produce a publication, and last month's issue (and this one) was a prime example of that philosophy, with particular emphasis on the cover. How many of you assumed that it was

produced, in its entirety, with Desktop Publishing (and secretly wondered where I found that "new font" for the Logo)? That was HAND-LETTERED (thanks to Irv Ostrow, another one of my highly-valued "helpers" around here), and produced through more "traditional" (read, "that method has been around longer"!) methods. I feel that it's great, and accomplishes the result that I desired when I first asked Irv for some help.

On the other hand, there ARE those folks out there who would take me to task for such a "breach of DTP etiquette"! In other words, if I didn't do the ENTIRE publication on the computer, then it's "not truly Desktop Publishing". Rather a skirmish similar to the "my-computer-is-better-than-yours" that we've all seen in the past, eh?

Wellsir, I think it's time to grow up, and address this question, before it gets too far out of hand. I've already stated my philosophy, regarding the "end justifying the means", but I'd like to point out a few reasons for this, at the present time...

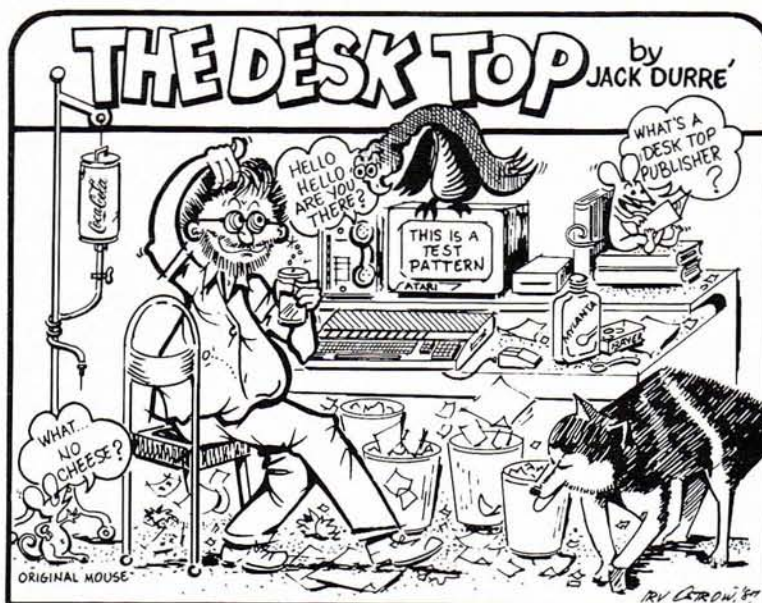
I'll use this (and last) month's

cover for an example. The new logo is arranged in what is known as "jocular disposition" (thanks, Gary Yost, for having provided me with the proper term!), and can't be done, at present, from my DTP program, or indeed, from most others. Does that mean that it should NOT be done? No, I don't think so. It IS possible from some of the higher-priced, "professional" machines, I believe, but does that mean that we're not able to produce that level of material? Perhaps, but this isn't the reason...(and by the way, the Times text on the cover WAS done with one of those "professional" machines...and required being pasted-in by hand!)

Nope, it's been done for many years, by a graphic artist, using his eye-hand coordination, along with all sorts of drawing instruments, photographic tools, etc. Why should it suddenly be forbidden for us to take advantage of those same means?

Expect to hear more on this in the future, both from me, and from other sources, but in the meantime, let's talk about another new item introduced with last month's issue...

(continued...)



The Desktop (continued...)

PAPER...

Step right up, ladies and gentlemen, and prepare to be confused! This topic is full of little ins and outs for me, at least, and it's an important one. I'm still learning the basics on this one, so don't expect to walk away as an expert, unless you got here that way!

Let's start with what we know...good ol' "bond" paper. That's what generally comes out of plain paper copy machines, and many publications, including earlier issues of *The JOURNAL* were printed on it ("20 lb", in our case). It's a good, all-around paper.

On the other hand, a more professional look is achieved, I feel, with a "coated stock", such as we're now using. This sort of paper is treated with a clay coating, which gives it a smoother, more polished surface. It also tends to lead to some problems for the offset printer, thus requiring a different approach at that stage. If you read last month's issue, you may have noted some of these problems.

To begin with, the coating adds to the weight of the paper, for the same thickness, but that's usually of little consequence until reaching the Post Office (brother...was *that* a consequence!!!). On the other hand, the fact that the surface is now less absorbent means that each page must be protected from others in the stack, as they come from the press. If one were producing only a few copies, it would be a simple matter to lift each one, as it was printed, and place it in some sort of drying rack, or other "safe" place, until it dried.

Unfortunately, such is not the case with most jobs, nor with most print shops. (I've never been in a print shop yet, excluding the mint, that had enough "stacking space" to begin with, so don't ever expect it for one of your own jobs!) In order to provide a space between sheets

of paper, to prevent "offsetting" (hmmmm...we print "offset", but we don't want the printed copies to *offset*...got that?), the printer must now "run powder". This means, simply, that as each sheet leaves the press, it is coated with a fine layer of powder, similar to talcum (perhaps it is...I dunno). The slight thickness of that powder prevents each sheet of paper from touching the one above, while allowing air to reach the surface, and remove the excess water. (I'm not about to get into the oil 'n water topic here, but suffice to say that this is the basis for the entire printing method used in most presses that we're ever likely to use.). The powder tends to make the stacks of paper slippery, which can also lead to complications further down the line, especially if you're using a small print shop, where manpower and more time often substitute for special equipment.

Additionally, since the ink tends to lie on the surface of the paper, it's more difficult for the press operator to apply just the right amount, unless they have a good bit of experience working with coated papers. Again, this is much more likely to be the case in the small print shop, with the "standard" A.B. Dick press, where most of us would find ourselves. Under those circumstances, that lack of ink leads to a "greying" of the overall appearance, which tempts the press operator to expose the litho plates just a bit more, for more "blackness". That may work for text only, but as you may have noticed, screens and textures tend to "block up", producing blotchy results. All in all, a difficult procedure for those who don't do this day in and day out. We're learning around here, and hope that you can profit from our mistakes! (See? I could've told you that it was all done to "illustrate" my point!)

There are a number of different "types" of paper stock, from "Text", and "Book" (both "coated"

and "uncoated"), to "Cover" (again, coated and uncoated), "Index", "Bristol", and then it *really* gets complicated, with all of the textured, patterned, and other forms of paper. I'm still looking for a good single source of information on this, but one that came highly recommended, and I'm still waiting to see, was **Pocket Pal**, from International Paper Co. (P.O. Box 100, Church St. Station, NYC, NY, 10008-0100, and make the \$4.25 check payable to "Pocket Pal")...these folks SHOULD know paper! I've also acquired sample books from a local paper supplier, and your own printer will have stacks of the same, I'm certain. You'll need to talk to him anyway, to be certain that he can purchase a particular type and brand of paper, as well as being sure that in "your size", your required quantity meets the minimum that his supplier will sell. Most printers don't like to be left with the remains of a paper order, and that's especially true, as one moves into the more exotic and costly papers.

PRINTERS...

In the Atari "branch" of the field of Desktop Publishing, there are two means, at present, for the output of "camera-ready" files, which will then, as a general rule, be taken to an offset printer for multiple copies. The first, and most prevalent form is from a dot matrix printer. This may be either a 9-pin, or a 24-pin unit. The second, and far less-used method, is from a laser printer. There are also two basic forms here, the less-expensive "straight", or "HP LaserJet" type, and the much more expensive PostScript-capable printer. We've been through this before, but I continually find that people are greatly confused by these last two, and likely to be even more so in the future...

Stated as simply as I can, the "straight" printer is much closer to a glorified "daisywheel-cum-

(continued...)

The Desktop (continued...)

dot-matrix" printer, than to a typesetting machine, while the opposite is true of the PS printer. Although the resolution from a straight laser may be advertised as "300 dots-per-inch", that doesn't make it capable of *drawing* each character. Rather, it must have each text character, as well as graphics, provided to it in some form of "bit-mapping". This means that across one square inch of paper surface, there are 300 x 300 points, or 90,000 "dots" that must be considered by the printer or the computer. The printer is then told whether to make each of those dots black or white. This takes time...LOTS of it! Further, if you have requested a 28-point letter, and the printer doesn't have that specific size loaded into its memory, it must "bit-map" it onto the paper, by enlarging/reducing a character size that it already has available, either through font cartridges, GDOS fonts, or similar means. (There ARE variations on this in progress, but not yet available to us.) Since larger sizes generally require more memory than do smaller sizes, the manufacturers try to provide us with only those smaller sizes that they believe that we'll use most, such as 6- to 12-point, and allow the system to scale up. This means that a 7-point size would have to be enlarged to quadruple-size for our 28-pt. example. In the process, the character grows "chunky", as the dots, or pixels, unnoticeable at smaller size, suddenly begin to play an important part here. PostScript printers, on the other hand, have been "taught how to draw" each character (this is an oversimplification, but sufficient to make my point.), allowing them to smoothly create each text character in any style that you've requested, so long as the printer has the details on what that font is supposed to look like. It's insensitive as to size, and indeed, to such things as skew, slant, etc.

(That allows us to place the character at any angle on the page, and to "warp" it to our needs, if desired!) The end result? The PostScript output looks much smoother, as its resolution is limited only by the toner particle size (or the silver particles in the film, in the more expensive phototypesetting machines), and is appreciably faster!

As time passes, the capabilities of these "straight" (non-PostScript-capable) lasers increases, while the price continues to inch down on PS printers. At last glance, General Computer is now selling a laser for the Macintosh that has no PS capabilities, and yet,

"PostScript printers...have been "taught how to draw..."

uses software-driven methods to do most of what PS does for most users. It's priced somewhere in the \$2500 category, and connects only to the Mac, at present, but the concept is strongly similar to the idea of Atari/GDOS/Atari laser. (GDOS appears to be approaching maturity, by the way...expect it in "final" form by the time that OS/2 arrives for IBMs!) It should be interesting to see how sales of this printer do for the Mac, given the inroads that PS has made in that market. It probably has a good niche available in the office environment, for simple reports, etc. It's more a question of whether such offices will refrain from spending the additional \$2000 or so, to acquire PostScript capabilities.

On the other hand, AST recently introduced an "under-\$4000"

PostScript laser printer, which means that you might well find them discounted to less than \$3500 by year's end. While that may still seem far too expensive for your own office or den, it will mean that more machines will become available to those desiring to make use of them on a "cost-per-page" basis.

For those of you who don't follow these things like a bloodhound, you may not yet be aware that there are also at least 5 different firms attempting to produce their own (most likely, in software) versions of PostScript "clones". Once this begins to happen, I'm sure that you'll see more and more exchange of PostScript files begin to take place, and the standard will multiply, in a fashion similar to the MS-DOS clones. This is one of the reasons behind my insistence on staying with PS (or possibly, a clone), rather than holding my breath for GDOS. I have it on fairly good authority that the semi-final form of GDOS will now allow for the implementation of one of these other interpreters/interfaces, in such a way as to be transparent to the user. We'll see, but I'm hopeful that such an implementation will happen. I have this gnawing fear that Atari will be so insistent on remaining with GDOS, as to ignore the true standard established by the rest of the DTP community, and we will again be found using one of "those games machines".

I've stuck with "Publishing Partner" for the last 9-10 months for many good reasons, but most importantly, now, because they recognized that standard early on, and have stayed with it. I would expect nothing less from Manhattan Graphics, in their ST rendition of "ReadySetGo" (of which we've heard nothing, of late). There are several other DTP programs about to appear, and while I may be completely wrong (indeed, I HOPE that I am!), I would

(continued...)

The Desktop (continued...)

expect these to take the GDOS path, simply because they don't ever expect the Atari market to BE as "professional" as the IBM or Apple markets. Such an attitude will insure that such IS the case, I fear.

IMPROVEMENTS...

Speaking of "Publishing Partner", I try to maintain an open channel with them, in order to learn of the latest uses, improvements, etc., and thought that you might also like to read of them here...

As I write this, Deron Kazmaier, senior programmer and partner with Soft Logik, tells me that he has just begun to pull together all of his different bits 'n pieces of code for the next version, and is now attempting to assemble it as a complete new version of the program. It's still not decided whether this will be known as "1.5", or "2.0", but from all of the changes, I vote for "2.0"! Since this is virtually a COMPLETE re-write, and 100% Assembly language, I understand, it may take a while, but I would expect that you'll be seeing it by the end of the year, and perhaps even sooner. I don't yet know what the upgrade policy will be, but based upon their past record, I don't think that you need worry about buying an earlier version, and not getting an upgrade.

They've been one of the most user-responsive software companies of any available to us. If you've been considering buying it, but are now hesitating, DON'T...buy it now, and learn to use it at this level!

Some of the new items that Soft Logik plans to incorporate will give us all of the power of any of those programs available on Macs and IBMs, including such things as being able to arrange lines of text in curves, circles, etc. We will also finally be able to "group" objects, which has been a sore point with most users, as once you've spent an

hour or two composing a form, for example, to then discover that you've placed it in the wrong location, can be somewhat irritating! Presently, you must re-locate EACH object, both text and graphic. Under the new scheme, you'll be able to "lasso" the group, and move them to another spot, or even to another page, I believe! There will also be far fewer screen redraws (timesavings), and the ability to "grab" the printed page within the window, and "push" it around, by holding down the right button! Over the past 8-9 months, Soft Logik has compiled a long list of improvements and changes, as they were requested both by users, and by themselves. The list ran to several hundred, I understand, and many, if not all, will be incorporated in the next version!

TYPE...

We continue to gain more typefaces with each week, it seems.

We are now beginning to see some ads in Macintosh and DTP magazines for "LASER FX", from Postcraft International (9429 Reseda Blvd., Ste. 476, Northridge, CA 91324. Telephone (818) 718-1598). This program is also in the works for the Atari ST, and is now in preliminary beta-testing. It accepts PostScript fonts, and allows the user to modify these fonts for all sorts of effects, including the more common, such as shadowed, and extrabold (neither of which is actually "common"!), as well as the more esoteric, such as "waterfall", "fountains" (varied shadings of the individual letters!), "broken", "metallized", etc. Really looks like quite a program,

and will add a great deal of versatility to our PS fonts and programs.

Returning to one of my earlier topics, I recently noted a question by a Publishing Partner user, referring to his use of a dot matrix printer for proofing, and sending his files out to a laser, for final printing. He asked if there was some way to use the Times font on his dot matrix, so that he might see what it would look like when finally done by the laser. The answer is yes, of course, but it requires that he know about the various font disks that have been done by the Font Factory, and others, for such purposes. These disks can be ordered through your local dealer, or directly from Soft Logik, who distribute them. I was particularly pleased when disk #6 was completed, as it included all of the built-in fonts for my QMS PS 800+, (or for the LaserWriter Plus).

This allowed me to take full advantage of such things as "Dingbats", which are all of those lovely little symbols that you'll see scattered around here, including the different stars, pointing hands, telephones, jet airplanes, etc. Really a handy little font to have, and one that I load as one of my 3 "default" fonts. (The other 2 are Helvetica and Times.)

Well, this has been rather long this time, but it's now time to see what sort of new "lessons" I've got to learn before you see this issue! <grin!>



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Fleet Street Publisher

by Mona and Lee Weiss

Eight to ten years ago high-speed photocopiers started a 'revolution' in the printing industry by producing a large share of the "quick and simple" work which had, till then, been done on small offset presses. The copiers were easier to operate and were cost effective on small quantities. Today, full service copy shops are commonplace.

During the last five to six years we have watched desktop publishing cause yet another 'revolution' in printing. What does all this have to do with your Atari? The answer is simple. Right off the shelf the ST is very capable when it comes to coordinating text and graphics. Add to this the proper software and a laser printer, and you have a complete 'pre-press' department for about one-third the cost of the currently popular Apple-based system. This allows you to produce camera-ready copy cleanly, efficiently and at a lower cost than using a phototypesetter. All you then have to do is bring the final copy to your local printer or copy shop and have the desired quantity reproduced.

Mirrorsoft Limited of Oxford, England has entered into the Atari Desktop Publishing field with a program called Fleet Street Publisher. The program has many of the features found in good word processors, such as auto-hyphenation (with resettable

parameters), justification, kerning, proportional spacing, search & replace, and an interesting command that turns the entire text in a defined block to either all upper case or all lower case. There are 20 presettable macros, a rudimentary drawing program, and really too many functions available to list here - and, chances are if you want to do something with text and graphics, Fleet Street Publisher will help you do it.

Three single sided disks hold the main program, fonts, and graphics library. While you can copy all three disks for archive purposes, you do need one of the three original disks in drive A when you load the program. Fleet Street Publisher is fully integrated with GEM and allows multiple windows open at the same time, and swapping of text between windows. The system requirements are 512K with TOS on ROM and either a color or monochrome monitor (we strongly suggest monochrome for its higher resolution). The Font disk offers you 6 fonts. You specify the point size (height) from 4 to 72 (up to 216 point on a 1040), slant, and weight (bold or medium). The Graphics disk contains 56 files of clip art each of which has one or more actual pictures in it (forcing you to crop and delete unwanted areas). Also included is an art conversion utility that allows you to use pictures created with the following

programs: Art Director (.ART), Degas Monochrome (.PI3), Degas Color (.PI1), and Neochrome (.NEO). This utility creates GEM (.IMG) standard files.

The documentation provides detailed explanations on how to boot up the program and the best way to use various system configurations, including one or two drives, ram disks and hard drives, as well as Epson compatible dot matrix printers. (The laser printer configuration is an upgrade option.) We particularly liked the placement of the glossary - up front so that you could thumb through it and learn the terms before putting it to use. (They should not have, however, positioned the hole punching so close to the edge of the sheet, as this will make the pages tend to tear out easily.) The fact that this program was written in England is immediately evident, for when you start to go through the docs you can't help but notice the British spellings. Also, all of the default measurements are in metric, and European page sizes (such as A4 and B5) show up in the selector box before 8 1/2 x 11 or 8 1/2 x 14 (termed U.S. letter and U.S. legal, respectively).

A step-by-step tutorial called "The Guided Tour" offers to quickly take you from a blank screen to a completely finished page containing text and graphics. We found this to be more easily

(continued...)

Fleet Street Publisher (continued...)

accomplished as a joint effort, with one person manning the mouse while the other read aloud from the manual. Due to our experience with computers and our extensive printing background, we felt confident that we would be able to accomplish the prearranged page layout with a minimum of instruction. Boy, were we mistaken!

We learned, through The Guided Tour, about setting up a page layout (you can set your ruler for metric, picas & points, or inches), defining text and picture blocks, importing text and graphics, resizing, cropping, box rules, and banner headlines. The five modes of operation that enabled us to do all of the above are represented by icons on the left of the screen. You must click on the appropriate icon before attempting the desired task. These include: Picture block mode (sizing, copying and repositioning graphics on the page); picture edit mode (altering graphics at the bit/pixel level); box rule mode (sizing and positioning boxes and rules); text block mode (working with defined blocks of text); text edit mode (direct entry of text and working on individual words or sentences). There is also an overflow buffer for extra text that doesn't fit in the specified area, and a clipboard for temporary storage of text.

Finally (four hours later), after constant references to the manual, we had something worth outputting to the printer. It was difficult to sit still for the eight minutes that it took to print the page on our Panasonic 1080, but the finished product was a satisfying result of our first effort with Desktop Publishing. The lengthy printing time is due to the fact that the current version of Fleet Street Publisher (1.0) does not know how to skip blank lines on a dot matrix printer. Therefore, any blank areas are still covered by a double pass of the printing head, even if no text appears

there. (We're sure this will be corrected in a future revision.)

During further work with the program, we uncovered an error in the documentation. While trying to resize a picture, we carefully followed the instructions and held down the shift key while clicking and dragging the lower right hand corner to a new position with the mouse. When we let go we were surprised to find that nothing had happened. We checked the manual again and kept retrying the stated sequence of commands till we were totally frustrated. After 'fooling around' with several other key combinations (F1, ALT, and ESC), we finally hit upon Control.

"It was difficult to sit still for the eight minutes that it took to print..."

Yes, control (together with the mouse drag) did work to resize the picture. This was the only actual error we found so far in the long and sometimes complicated documentation. (P.S. It took about 8-10 seconds for Fleet Street Publisher to resize our picture and refresh the image on the screen. This seemed slow for the normally fast ST.)

Since we haven't tried out any of the other desktop publishing programs, we cannot honestly compare the features of Fleet Street Publisher to the other programs available for the ST. We have tried to evaluate it on its own merits (and faults). We find it to be a workable program at this point. We feel that it will be even better if the printer routines are speeded up, if we could save new default measurements and if the documentation is revised. We

would also like to see more fonts and additional clip art (with the pictures as separate items instead of 'ganged' together).

Desktop Publishing is becoming an important time saver in today's business world, and there are already shops dedicated strictly to promoting its uses. Small print shops are currently replacing obsolete typesetting equipment with desktop publishing systems, and new shops are 'starting out' with these systems as an integral part of their equipment. It is therefore important that any program be accurate in documentation, easily mastered, and full-featured. We are hopeful that Fleet Street Publisher will soon be revised in the areas in which it is lacking, thus making it more attractive to the businessman.

P.S. If you need a picture of a garbage truck, check the graphics disk under "dustbin lorry".

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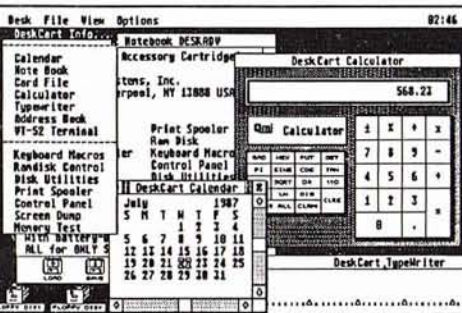
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Lee Weiss, and his Mother, Mona operate a family-owned print shop, "Printing & More", in Lauderdale Lakes, Florida. They have used an 8-bit Atari in their shop for the last several years, and have produced many jobs with it. They recently moved over to the 1040ST, and paid for the machine in the first 2 weeks!



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